
GCSE

Dance

Unit 1 – 42301 – Critical Appreciation of Dance
Report on the Examination

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General Comments

It was pleasing to see some very well answered scripts, where it was clear that students had been given the opportunity to study professional works in their entirety as well as being able to articulate their understanding of different aspects of practical work from other units within the course. These students could clearly describe motifs/movement phrases clearly and sequentially, and were able to describe and explain different production aspects of their chosen professional works in detail. Students are advantaged when they read through the entire question paper before deciding to name their dance work 1 and 2, as some of the questions may suit one professional dance work over another. The majority of students could describe aspects of production clearly and could write coherently about contributions of such aspects clearly. It was very pleasing to see that a greater number of students are backing up contributions of production aspects with examples of the work to clarify their answers. Students who bullet point answers can fail to explain contributions fully, whereas students who write in continuous prose usually explained their points in more detail and were awarded more marks accordingly. A large number of students understood the difference between technical and expressive performing skills. Not all responses defined alignment clearly but they showed an understanding of it through exercises to improve performance and the importance of alignment when performing, indicating that they are familiar with the language from units 2 and 3.

There were no examples of both Christopher Bruce works used to answer the paper. Schools are reminded, however that students are severely disadvantaged if they study a work that is not on the prescribed list of professional dance works as can be found in the specification and on the AQA website. Only works from the prescribed list can be awarded marks. Schools are advised to consult the specification regularly throughout the course and to use the AQA fact file.

The most popular works studied were: Swansong, 'Still Life' at the Penguin Cafe, Ghost Dances, Fault Line, Perfect and Nutcracker!. It was pleasing to see that many students using Bird Song and Rosas Danst Rosas understood that the works are abstract and they did not attempt to give the works a narrative. It should be noted however that while one of the themes for Rosas Danst Rosas is rage, students writing about 'frustration' were not awarded marks. Similarly, marks were not awarded for suggesting that the dancers are in a mental institution.

Some students who did not answer the professional dance work questions particularly well answered question 4 with full answers, showing their understanding of the practical elements of their GCSE course and the application of technical and expressive terms in performing assessment.

Dance work 1

Question 1(a)

This question was well answered and most students gained the full 2 marks. The majority of students could identify an idea, concept or subject matter of their chosen dance work

Question 1 (b) (i)

Again, this question was answered well. It is clear that students can identify different styles within their chosen professional dance works.

Question 1 (b) (ii)

Students achieved well when they described features of the specific style named e.g. *post-modern*; *repetitive*, *everyday actions*, *pedestrian actions* etc. Occasionally students gave generic answers e.g. *turns*. These responses were not awarded marks as they are features of many different dance styles.

Question 1 (c) (i)

When answered well, students wrote a clear sequential motif for a **group** of dancers. Examiners could almost visualise the motif from the dance work in the best responses. A few students wrote clear, sequential motifs but for a solo dancer e.g. the zebra in 'Still Life' at the Penguin Café. These responses were not awarded marks as the question clearly states a motif performed by a group. Some answers were very vague with no specific action, use of space, dynamic or relationship being described in detail.

Question 1 (c) (iv)

Where question 1 (c) (i) was answered well, students could explain their choice of motif and how it related to the meaning/choreographic intent. Where students described a solo in 1 (c) (i) and then answered correctly in (ii), they were awarded the marks. Students who did not clearly identify a motif in 1 (c) (i) were not awarded marks as they could not further explain how the motif described related to the meaning/choreographic intent of the work.

Dance work 2

Question 2 (a)

This question was generally answered well. Students could identify a sound artist or composer. Names cited incorrectly but phonetically accurate were awarded marks.

Question 2 (b) (i)

Many students could identify a type of accompaniment.

Question 2 (b) (ii)

Many students were awarded both marks for this question. Some very detailed descriptions of accompaniment were given.

Question 2 (b) (iii)

Many students provided accompaniment examples with each contribution and could clearly explain how the accompaniment helps an audience understand the meaning/choreographic intent. It should be noted that some works lend themselves better to this question than others and students had not always considered which work would be best to use for each question.

Question 2 (b) (iv)

Good responses to this question included answers such as creating a mood/atmosphere, accompaniment complementing the action content, accompaniment providing a structure for the dance, accompaniment creating a climax etc. Again many of these answers were backed up with an example from the work.

Both works

Question 3 (a)

The majority of students achieved full marks for this question. Good responses included reference to colour, shape, pattern of lighting, directions of lights, types of camera effects, description of backdrops, types of setting – cyclorama, proscenium, site-specific etc.

Question 3 (b)

This question was reasonably well answered. Many students were awarded some of the 10 marks for effective contributions with examples to support the contribution. Weaker students described features of the set design with no further explanation, some students repeated contributions for both works. Students who were awarded full marks offered contributions with clear examples from the work. Students who used works such as Rosas Danst Rosas and Bird Song offered clear, detailed answers relating to camera effects and the contribution of those camera effects. Evaluative comments were positively awarded where appropriate, giving students the opportunity to expand on their answers.

Own Work

Question 4(a)(i)

Strength was clearly understood and defined. Students were awarded marks for suggesting answers such as power in muscle, having control over the body. Alignment was not so clearly defined. Responses such as body arranged in a straight line, or having knees over feet etc were awarded marks. Student speak was carefully considered and awarded when appropriate.

Question 4(a)(ii)

This question was answered well with responses such as *performing more technically accurate actions helps a dancer perform safely* being awarded for strength and alignment.

Question 4(a)(iii)

Almost all students could suggest an appropriate exercise to develop each skill with exercises such as the plank, push-ups, sit-up etc being offered for strength, and plies, balancing book on a head and walking without dropping it being awarded marks. Students had more difficulty explaining how strength and alignment were developed by these exercises. Examiners looked for comments suggesting progression for strength e.g. increasing number of reps daily and some reference to feedback when developing alignment such as looking in a mirror, filming yourself and watching back etc.

Question 4(b)(i)

Many students understood the term projection naming accurate aspects of projection. Fewer students explained the effect of projection on an audience.

Question 4(b)(ii)

Many students understood the difference between expressive and technical performing skills and accurately named two expressive skills. Some weaker students repeated strength and alignment despite them being named as technical performing skills in 4(a)(i).

Question 4(b)(iii)

Students who achieved marks in 4(b)(ii) could answer accurately and responses were often clear and detailed. Students lost marks when no reference to the idea of friends and enemies was made in the answer or where technical skills had been named in 4(b)(ii).

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

Converting Marks into UMS marks

Convert raw marks into Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) marks by using the link below.

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion